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Mr. J. J. Bagnall, OO/FDB
Chairman, CIA Transliteration Committee

1 April 1949

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 ORE/BFE, Chairman
Ad Hoc Interdepartmental Committee on Transliteration
of Chinese, Japanese and Korean
Report of meeting of Ad Hoc Interdepartmental Committee on Transliteration
of Chinese, Japanese and Korean


1. A meeting of the above committee was held on Thursday, 24 March 1949 at 1000 hours in Conference Room 2001 "M" Building, CIA. All invited participants had representatives present, except Department of the Army, as follows:

Lt. Col. E. I. Pratt, Jr., USAF (AFOIR/RC)


Lt. Comdr. I. F. Superfine, USN (ONI)

Mr. Carl Nelson, State (B.I.)

Miss Sophia A. Soucerman, State (DIR/Ge)

 CIA (B;R;)

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 CIA (B/FE): Chairman

2. Stated purpose of the meeting, in line with previously determined objectives, was "to investigate problems of transliteration and make recommendations" in the light of the following accepted criteria:

a. Does the system represent the foreign language adequately, consist entirely and without confusion?

b. Is it at present widely adopted?

c. Does it result in spellings close to those commonly used?

d. Can it be written on a standard typewriter or teletype and is it adaptable for IBM machines?

e. What provision for exceptions is made?

3. On a basis of discussion in which there was agreement without dissent and of tabulated evidence of systems generally regarded as most satisfactory by US government agencies, and academic institutions, societies and publications, the recommendation below was developed and unanimously adopted by the representatives of the Departments of State, Air and Navy and the Central Intelligence Agency.

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4. Recommended that:

a. The IAC agencies adopt the Board of Geographic Names (BGN) transliteration system for all transliteration purposes in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages. (In effect, Wade-Giles, modified Hepburn, and McCune-Reischauer).

b. Commonly-used personal or place names be included in the BGN system as exceptions, and shown within appropriate parentheses.

c. Recommendations for changes to the BGN system be made to BGN by the IAC agencies, when and if circumstances warrant consideration of such changes.

d. An IAC Committee be formed to determine aids, guides and handbooks that should be compiled for the use and application of the systems, and to recommend responsibility within the IAC agencies for compiling them.

e. The IAC agencies consider the desirability of recommending to the Congress that the BGN system be extended for all Chinese, Japanese and Korean language transliteration purposes with a view to making it incumbent upon all Federal agencies to use the BGN system.

5. With this completion of responsibility assigned to the Ad Hoc Committee, it is suggested that the above recommendations be appropriately transmitted to the IAC agencies, leading to formal approval and adoption.

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ADDENDUM:

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Subsequently, about April 15, Mr. Roy McNair, by telephone expressed the Department of the Army's concurrence in the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee for Transliteration of Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

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